



Pryor OPI Team - Planning for Improvement January 11, 2011

School improvement is not a mystery; effective instruction is the most important factor effecting positive learning outcomes. Improving instruction requires us first to carefully look at what we now do and what we should do in our classrooms. Do we have the heart to reverse the status quo? We must be willing to remove any barriers that prevent an honest assessment of our current practices and reorient our time and energy to common sense practices that will make a difference.

Instruction News---Calli Rusche-Nicholson Instructional Leader (IL):

Summary of December:

- 4 full coaching cycles • 3 modeled lessons
- 2 program implementation checklists
- SIT meeting • 3 administrative meetings
- 1 lesson planning meeting
- High school MBI meeting
- Elementary math collaborative visit
- Corrective reading advisory meetings
- Professional development and PLC teacher collaborative planning
- Continued observations of all content areas K-12 grades

Elementary: This past month the elementary continued to focus on program implementation of Corrective Reading and Imagine It. The staff is continuing to work on administering the programs with fidelity.

A collaborative visit was held on December 16th when the kindergarten teacher visited St. Charles to observe Everyday Math in the kindergarten classroom. The teacher and I attended the school from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and spent time reflecting on practices observed during the visit. Part of the planned follow-up is a visit to Crow Agency to observe Imagine It in kindergarten, 1st, and 2nd grades.

Junior High and High School: The high school staff received an orientation on job-embedded professional development and how professional learning community (PLC) teacher collaboration time can be utilized. This was a kick off to begin professional development and teacher collaboration every Wednesday morning until second semester. Once second semester begins teachers may have professional development and collaboration two or three

times a week. The first collaboration topic will be on how to effectively utilize and monitor advisory times. The schedule changes allow for every teacher to have a prep period freeing up 7:55-8:50 a.m. as common collaboration time. The new schedule also allows for a short period before lunch time for student advisory. To begin the advisory teachers will utilize the book Tiny Warrior and its curriculum for advisory content. The new schedule also allows for the majority of Corrective Reading students to have their intervention earlier in the day as opposed to the 7th period when students may be checked out of school. The counselor, principal, and I have also been meeting with Corrective Reading and Bridges students to check on progress. These meetings helped reassign six students who were misplaced in reading interventions.

Two external consultants visited Plenty Coups High School to provide additional job-embedded professional development to the language arts and math teachers. Side-by-Side consulting made their first visit on December 2nd to provide Language Arts support. Two teachers were present out of five for an introductory consultation. Follow-up from the visit included suggestions on starting classroom document notebooks, having the reading interventions earlier in the day, and having additional training on the components of a 60-minute lesson. On December 10th the Algebraic Thinking coach, Roy Shelton provided support to the high school Foundations teacher only as the junior high math teacher was gone.

Next Steps: As a follow-up to the new high school schedule, the counselor and I will be working closely to ensure each student is placed appropriately. To dovetail this process the teachers will work collaboratively to find a process to monitor student graduation plans

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during advisory periods. The teacher collaboration PLC time will also include discussion around necessary steps for MBI implementation and other topics addressing school improvement as we develop our collaborative skills and implementation of ideas.

Transformation News --- David Stringfield: **Pryor's School Improvement Team** met in small committees during the month of December and has three planned meetings for January. The **administrative team** created a job description for an "At-risk Coordinator," which we see as an important step to increase student success. Grant funds helping to provide funds for this position are finalized as soon as we secure the Intergovernmental Service Agreement (ISA). Grant funds will also help pay for technology improvement and instructional materials for advisory periods. The **technology committee** met to set priorities and propose action steps to improve technology efficiency in the Pryor School District. The **high school scheduling committee** proposed a revised schedule to address staff efficiency, corrective reading flexibility and create advisory periods. Classroom materials provided will help structure these advisory periods enhancing staff connections with students and families.

The **School Improvement Team** meets on January 13th and 14th in Billings with other Schools of Promise to discuss progress, obstacles and successes. On January 18th, we meet in Pryor to begin planning summer school, extending learning times for students, improving ideas for parent involvement, and to hear outcomes of high school staff discussion on student incentives to improve attendance.

Student Attendance (second quarter) – In the K-6 elementary, there are 44 students now enrolled. The mid-quarter attendance rate (Nov. 9th – Dec. 10th) is 76%. This is lower than reported earlier this year, which has been typically about 90%. We have 20 enrolled in middle school and 50 enrolled in high school.

Powerschool implementation is still unreliable in the 7th-12th grades making accurate attendance rates impossible at this time. However, half day, second quarter attendance estimates indicate about a 78% attendance rate for the middle school and a 75% attendance rate in high school. These are about the same attendance rates as reported for the 2009-10 school year.

Teacher Attendance rate was 97% in September, 95% in October and 90% in November and December.

Early Release Professional Development Feedback and Planning - Our first early release professional development day on December 1st was attended by 100% of the teaching and teacher's aide staff. All of the participants reported extremely high feedback (mostly excellent) on written evaluations and many requested additional follow-up with the **National Coalition Building Institute**, some suggesting involving students as well. The January 5th professional development with the **Native Children's Trauma Center** was also highly successful. For the March 3rd early release professional development, we will collaborate on improving classroom discipline and the office discipline referral process with **MBI Consultants** facilitating.

School Board Involvement --- Stevie Schmitz: The school board met on December 16. Items requiring the board's action included the following:

- Amending the school day schedule to include advising time for students;
- Adding a day to the school calendar to make up for the recent "snow day;"
- Approving a trip to California for the senior class;
- Accepting the resignation from the superintendent effective June 30;
- Scheduling a special work session training for updated policies;
- Contracts for golf and track coaches and long-term substitute art contract;

- Posting for half-time reading teacher and at-risk teacher (funded by SIG); and
- Posting for special education aid, part-time transportation coordinator and substitute bus driver.

The next scheduled regular meetings will be January 11th and February 8th at 5:00 p.m. A special meeting will be held on January 22nd at 8:00 a.m. for policy review and training. As your School Board Coach, I will be available for consultation for any and all board progressive efforts over the course of the grant. Focusing on consistent board involvement to enhance the learning environment will go a long way toward sustainable improvement efforts.

Mona Big Day's great efforts have paid off as she shared new reports for budget and bills paid with the board. This process will assist the board in monitoring the budget with actual expenses. Looking ahead, the board will schedule dates for board training at the next meeting and will begin discussions about the superintendent search process.

Community News --- Savannah Sinquah: Savannah has been helping set up concessions for the high school. She is developing a parent Excel sheet with locations and names of students to begin her home-visiting programs. She is assisting the staff on the development of an At-Risk Coordinator position. She is involved in the MBI programs and helping with the art and logo contests. Savannah is also helping establish fundraising with the Indian Club and the high school students. She helped put together gifts for a Christmas gift hand-out.

From the Helena Office -- Nancy Coleman, SIG Unit Director:

District Action Plan - (DAP) We are providing a template for writing the detailed action plans. We are also coordinating with the districts on the information required to write the ISAs (Intergovernmental Service Agreements) to expedite that process.

School of Promise Performance Appraisal System – (SOPPAS) The approved list of the

people trained in SOPPAS has been given to the district. The Labor/Management team will meet and pick one or more of the listed providers to present for a contract to the board at the January meeting. The board needs to approve the contract for those services so their work can be completed by May 2011.

Overview of the Montana Behavior Initiative

(MBI): This is a system approach to establish the social culture and behavior supports needed for a school to be an effective learning environment for all students. Each school has an MBI team that works to establish and teach behavior expectations. This service is being provided for the district through on-site assistance from MBI consultants with support from the SIG OPI on-site staff.

When the MBI system is in place:

- Staff are more consistent in their expectations and actions;
- Students understand and are more likely to follow rules and expectations;
- A more positive relationship exists between and among staff and students; and
- The focus is on learning.

Grant Requirements for January and February:

For the board's information we are providing a listing of things that need to be accomplished at various levels. Much of the work is a continuation from the previous month:

For the on-site OPI employees:

- Continue to provide planning for the implementation of the District Action Plan (DAP);
- Begin work with SIG District Leadership Team (DLT) to establish District Action Plans details;
- Continue to assist with organizing the collaborative Professional Learning Communities (PLCs);
- Continue to support actions steps within the Montana Behavioral Initiative (MBI);
- Continue to schedule external professional development providers;

- Attend SIG meeting in Billings in January with all other SIG groups;
- Continue to provide job embedded professional development through training and coaching for all staff.

For the Principal:

- Continue to attend School Improvement Team meeting(s);
- Continue to attend and coordinate professional development of the PLCs;
- Continue to lead, along with the MBI facilitator, action steps within the MBI;
- Continue the participation with the SOPPAS (Schools of Promise Performance Assessment System) to provide support and feedback to teachers on effective instruction;
- Begin the work with SIG DLT to establish District Action Plans;
- Attend SIG meeting in Billings in January with all other SIG groups;
- Continue to monitor a system to determine 'at risk' students based on – attendance, past class grades, discipline, support systems for success (student information system); and
- Begin gathering the baseline data for last year 2009-2010 on several grant required 'indicators.'

For the District/Superintendent:

- Provide the board the name of the external evaluator that was selected by the labor/management team for board approval (teacher evaluations);
- Continue to support the implementation of the DAP through resources, etc.; and
- Continue to participate in the finance calls that are provided by the OPI once a month.

For teachers:

- Actively participate in collaborative PLCs;
- Continue to plan and implement lesson plans that include standards alignment with ongoing assessments;
- Continue to implement the programs for communication arts and mathematics with fidelity;

- Continue to actively participate in school improvement teams which you are involved with; and
- Begin the evaluation process with 3rd party evaluators.

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Statewide Youth and Community

Outreach – Donnie Wetzel: This was an excellent month for the Community Liaisons (CLs). They have developed some great relationships in the four key areas (Elders, Youth, Community, and Area organizations). They are being seen throughout the community and stepping in where needed to assist the SIG staff, teachers, youth and administrators. They took great initiative on setting things up during the break and volunteered their time, trucks, and also identified resources to assist with any events. Our main goal over the last few months was to be seen – face-to-face contact and helping where needed. I feel relationships and trust are being built with our CLs and the communities they live in. They are a key factor in the SIG because they are the voice of the people and the youth. It will take some time to show the community and youth that we are there to help them and support them in the schools, but the CLs are approaching the low hanging fruit and winning small battles that will eventually bring better support.

We will now start to bring in more structure to the CLs. They will be receiving the Solid Foundations training that lays out an organized approach for them. We will offer them PTA training. We will be developing a calendar at each location to lay out goals and objectives for the next three months. After-school programs will be implemented as well as mentorship programs with community members and the tribal colleges. We will be approaching the Tribal Councils and other important entities on the reservation to collaborate and build better relationships. It will definitely be an exciting new year!

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SIG Field Consultant News -- Courtney

Peterson:

- Assisted Transformation and Instruction Leaders with District Action Planning
- Site visits to Pryor, Lodge Grass and a site visit to Frazer November 15-16
- Coordinated visits by consultants Frances Bessellieu and Ann Ganzert
- Begin standards setting, IEFA coordination, and pacing planning for McDougal-Litell
- Research upcoming areas of implementation

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School Advocate News – Sarah Pierce:

Wrapping up the year and semester means planning ahead for the future. I have several projects that I am currently working on to help student achievement. Currently I am researching summer school programs, credit recovery programs and ways to connect our students to AP and other rigorous courses across other Montana schools. I am also continuing to develop and align the goals that have been set forth by the Federal School Improvement Grant to goals that are already in place set by the state and the districts. I am also working on building communication between teachers across multiple districts. The SIG Web site should be up and running for public display soon. I am also working on building capacity at each school site in best practices in planning for professional development with outside providers and through job-embedded approaches. Teachers working toward National Board Certification through the Take One! program will have their first meeting together on January 15th at Dull Knife College.

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